

ELDRITCH

MOON



STORY AND ART BY
SHAWNA NASH GARNY

(C) SMG 14 NASHOBA-HOSTINA NASHOBA-HOSTINA.DEVIANTART.COM

In spite of what Dylan had told me... I didn't quite relax. I'd been through a lot... But when I was bitten, I'd been surrounded by others who had gone through similar changes as I.



I could look around and see that things could be okay for people like me. But after being kidnapped, held prisoner... it was harder to cope.



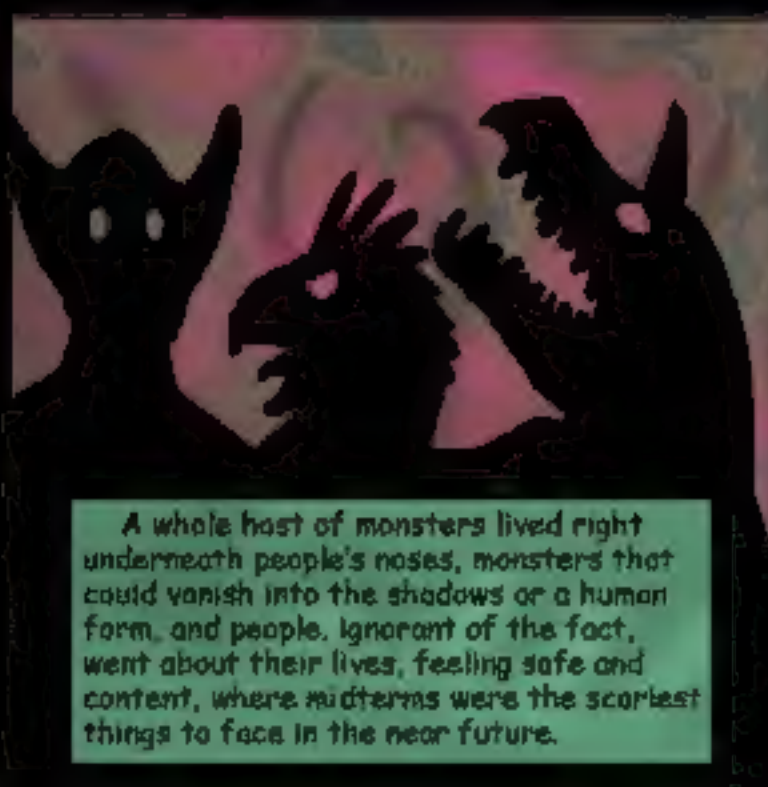
I kept expecting the Benant-ants wolves to suddenly appear and drag me off to their cells again. I had nightmares of being trapped in that bestial wolf form, of stone walls, of red eyes in the night and of darkness.



Somehow, Maggie put up with me. I don't know if I could be so understanding if things had been the other way around.



School seemed so... surreal. Literary works and oil paints seemed so unimportant, after what I'd been through, what I had survived. And as January headed towards February, school functions like the upcoming Valentine's Ball seemed downright ridiculous.



A whole host of monsters lived right underneath people's noses, monsters that could vanish into the shadows or a human form, and people, ignorant of the fact, went about their lives, feeling safe and content, where nightmares were the scariest things to face in the near future.

Strangekey, I didn't quite manage to get fired from work. Somehow they got the idea that I was sick. I get the feeling Gaoth intervened



HONEY, ARE YOU SURE? YOUR HAIR LOOKS SO LOVELY LONG...



CUT IT. I NEED ONE CHANGE THAT WAS MINE TO MAKE.



Strangely enough, the only place where I felt safe was The Leyline, and that was mostly because Dylan was usually there. He'd found me... and I couldn't help but think that if someone was crazy enough to try to get me there... Dylan could follow me.

LOOK, GAOTH, YOU OWE ME A FAVORRR. I'M CALLING IT IN. I JUST NEED ONE CHANCE—





THIS IS A POOR USE OF THE FAVOR, BUT I WILL GIVE YOU ONE CHANCE. YOU GET ONE NIGHT, FROM SUNS—



YOU SNAKE!



FAITH, THE NEW LOOK SUITS YOU—

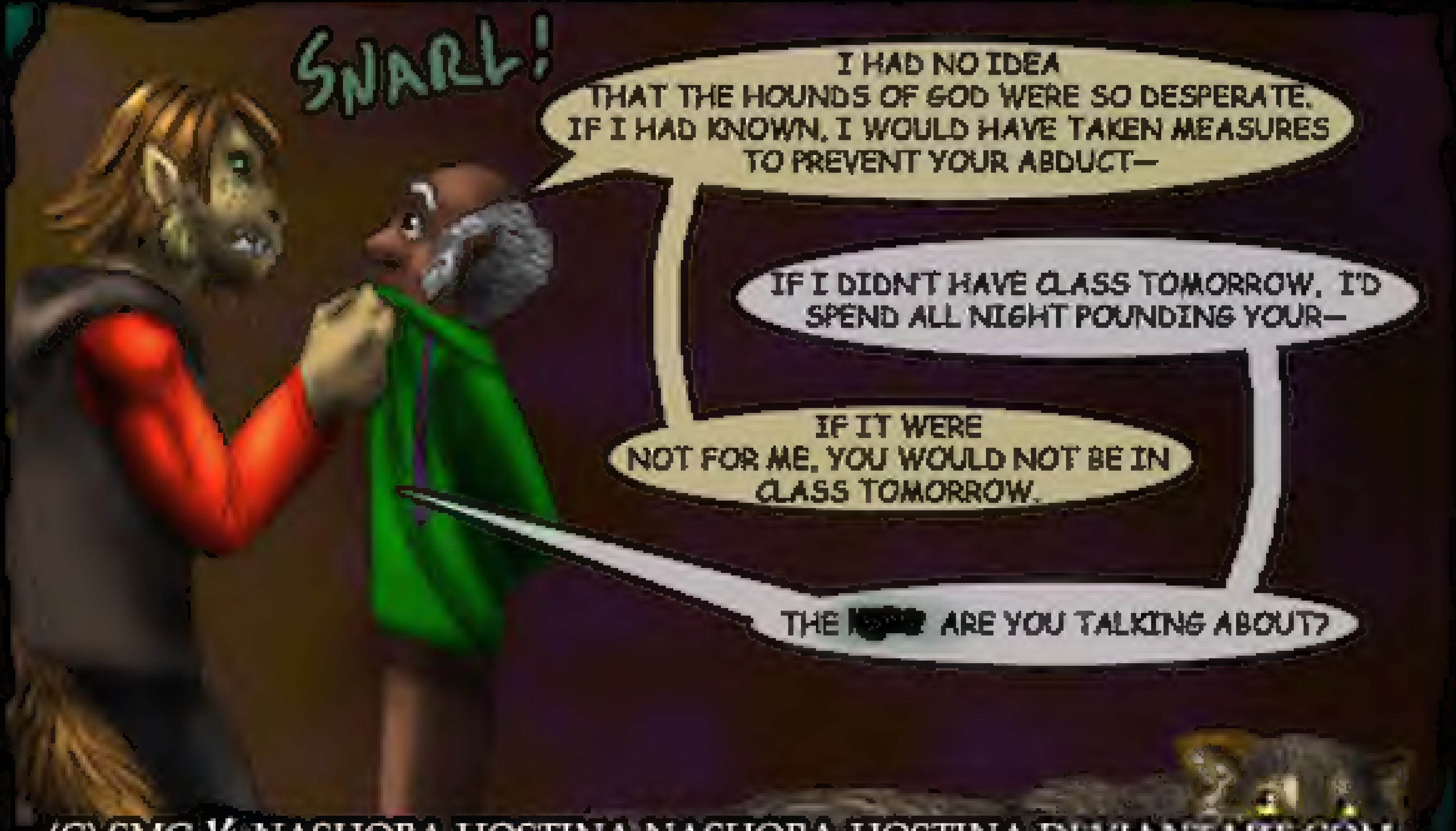
GRRRRRRRR

I AM AWARE OF YOU'RE UPSET BUT--



NO ~~NO~~ YOU ARE, NO WONDER YOU'VE HIDDEN FOR WEEKS!

R R R R R R



SNARL!

I HAD NO IDEA THAT THE HOUNDS OF GOD WERE SO DESPERATE. IF I HAD KNOWN, I WOULD HAVE TAKEN MEASURES TO PREVENT YOUR ABDUCT—

IF I DIDN'T HAVE CLASS TOMORROW, I'D SPEND ALL NIGHT POUNDING YOUR—

IF IT WERE NOT FOR ME, YOU WOULD NOT BE IN CLASS TOMORROW.

THE ~~NO~~ ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

THE SCHOLARSHIP YOU RECEIVED THAT, ALONG WITH YOUR JOB, ALLOWS YOU TO PAY YOUR TUITION—THE GOODFELLOW FUND. MYSELF, MY FRIEND ROBIN, AND SEVERAL OTHER... ASSOCIATES OF MINE PUT IT TOGETHER. WE'VE ALSO DONATED MUCH, MADE GREAT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

... WHY?

TO BETTER THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO MAY BECOME, OR ALREADY ARE, ELDRITCH FOLK. MY ASSOCIATES AND I DID EXTENSIVE RESEARCH ON A GREAT MANY PEOPLE, FAITH, AND THOSE WHO SEEMED LIKELY TO DEVELOP INTO AN ELDRITCH BEING WERE OFFERED SCHOLARSHIPS. THE MORE LIKELY THE POSSIBILITY, THE LARGER THE SCHOLARSHIP. BECAUSE OF THE HIGH DENSITY OF ELDRITCH FOLK ALREADY HERE, WE COULD HELP EASE THE TRANSITION. YOU WOULD NOT HAVE THE MEANS TO PAY YOUR TUITION AT A SCHOOL OF THIS CALIBER WERE IT NOT FOR MYSELF.

FAITH, BELIEVE ME, I AM TRULY SORRY FOR WHAT HAPPENED. THAT'S WHY I DID MY BEST TO ENSURE YOU RETURNED HOME SAFELY, SENDING YOUR FRIENDS, SENDING THE SHIP. AND I SWEAR, I WILL DO WHAT I CAN TO KEEP YOU, AND EVERYONE HERE PROTECTED. ...WOULD YOU MIND PUTTING ME DOWN NOW?

ON THE CONDITION THAT YOU NEVER KEEP A SECRET LIKE THAT AGAIN.

ABOUT THAT...

SNARL!

WE HAD INTENDED TO TELL YOU RIGHT AFTER NEW YEAR'S... WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE READY, BUT THEN AFTER YOUR ORDEAL, WE DIDN'T WANT TO ALARM YOU FURTHER, BUT—

THUD!

GET TO THE
POINT FOR ONCE,
SEAMUS!

WHAT'S
THE WOLF MOON?

THE
WOLF MOON IS
COMING.

IT'S WHEN
YOU'LL BECOME DANGEROUS
TO OTHERS. WHEN YOU MAY
WELL AND TRULY BE--

BE WHAT?

IN YOUR TERMS...
A MONSTER.

GAOTH! NO...
YOU WON'T BE A
MONSTER. YOU'LL
BE AN ANIMAL.
DRIVEN BY
INSTINCT--

--LIKE SOME
OTHER VARIETIES
OF LYCANTHROPE.
BUT YOU WILL BE
DANGEROUS. GRAHLL
WEREWOLVES GO INTO
A FRENZY OF SORTS
AT THE WOLF MOON
CALLED BITE LUST.
THEY BECOME FERAL,
UNTIL THEY BITE
SOMEONE. IT'S HOW
THE CONDITION
SPREADS.

BUT... BUT I'M KIND
OF A HYBRID, RIGHT? AND KINDA
DEVELOPMENTALLY CHALLENGED.
MAYBE IT WON'T HAPPEN!

...WHAT DO
I DO?

BUT IF
IT DOES,
YOU'LL BE
A DANGER TO
EVERYONE
AROUND
YOU.

GET TO THE
POINT FOR ONCE,
SEAMUS!

WHAT'S
THE WOLF MOON?

THE
WOLF MOON IS
COMING.

IT'S WHEN
YOU'LL BECOME DANGEROUS
TO OTHERS. WHEN YOU MAY
WELL AND TRULY BE--

BE WHAT?

IN YOUR TERMS...
A MONSTER.

GAOTH! NO...
YOU WON'T BE A
MONSTER. YOU'LL
BE AN ANIMAL.
DRIVEN BY
INSTINCT--

--LIKE SOME
OTHER VARIETIES
OF LYCANTHROPE.
BUT YOU WILL BE
DANGEROUS. GRAHLL
WEREWOLVES GO INTO
A FRENZY OF SORTS
AT THE WOLF MOON
CALLED BITE LUST.
THEY BECOME FERAL,
UNTIL THEY BITE
SOMEONE. IT'S HOW
THE CONDITION
SPREADS.

BUT... BUT I'M KIND
OF A HYBRID, RIGHT? AND KINDA
DEVELOPMENTALLY CHALLENGED.
MAYBE IT WON'T HAPPEN!

...WHAT DO
I DO?

BUT IF
IT DOES,
YOU'LL BE
A DANGER TO
EVERYONE
AROUND
YOU.

Dylan helped me get through my nightmares... and a couple of mornings, I smelled Todd outside my bedside window. But finally... the night came.



THIS IS THAT SECOND JOB I TOLD YOU ABOUT. BUT... BUT YOU AREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE HERE.

ACTUALLY I'M HERE TO SEE SEAMUS...

GLAD YOU LISTENED! FAITH HERE IS A... WHY... WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ONE ANOTHER LIKE THAT?

FAITH! FANTASTIC, LET'S GET YOU SIGNED IN AS OUR FIRST LYCANTHROPE AND--

WE, AH... WORK TOGETHER.

OH. OH! I, UH, I'M SO SORRY I... YOU KNOW WHAT? I'LL JUST ENTER FAITH INTO THE DATABASE MYSELF, JAY, FAITH, HOW ABOUT WE GO...

OH GOD, FAITH, I DIDN'T KNOW! I'M SO SORRY...

YOU'LL BE MORE SORRY IF THIS CAUSES PROBLEMS AT WORK. I NEED THAT JOB, SEAMUS.

BUT FOR THE MOMENT, EVEN WORSE THINGS MIGHT BE ABOUT TO HAPPEN, SO LET'S JUST GET ON WITH IT...





WAIT YOU'RE SERIOUS?

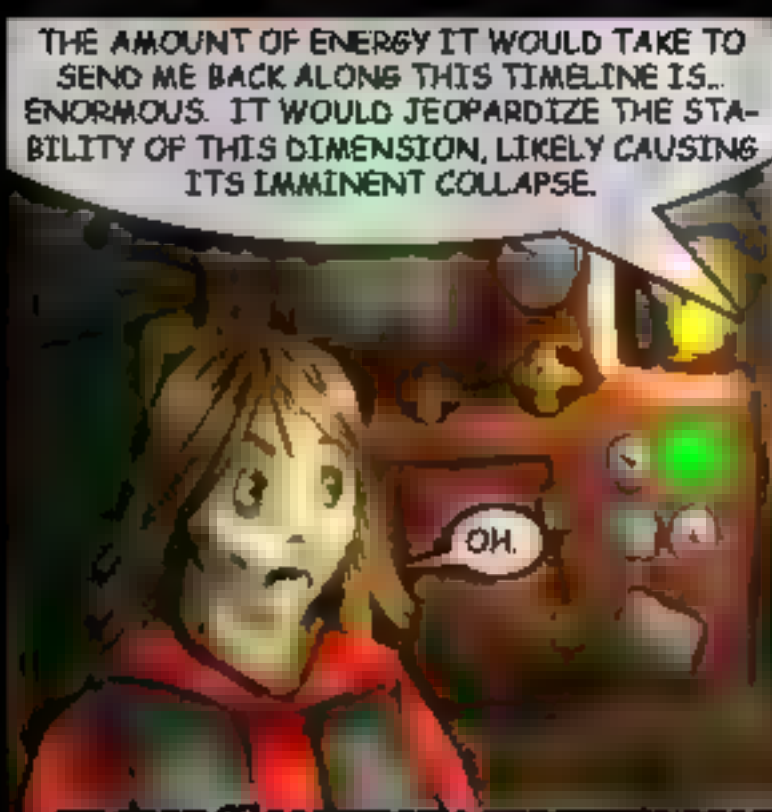
I WANT TO SEE MY WIFE AND SON.



DO YOU THINK IT'LL WORK?

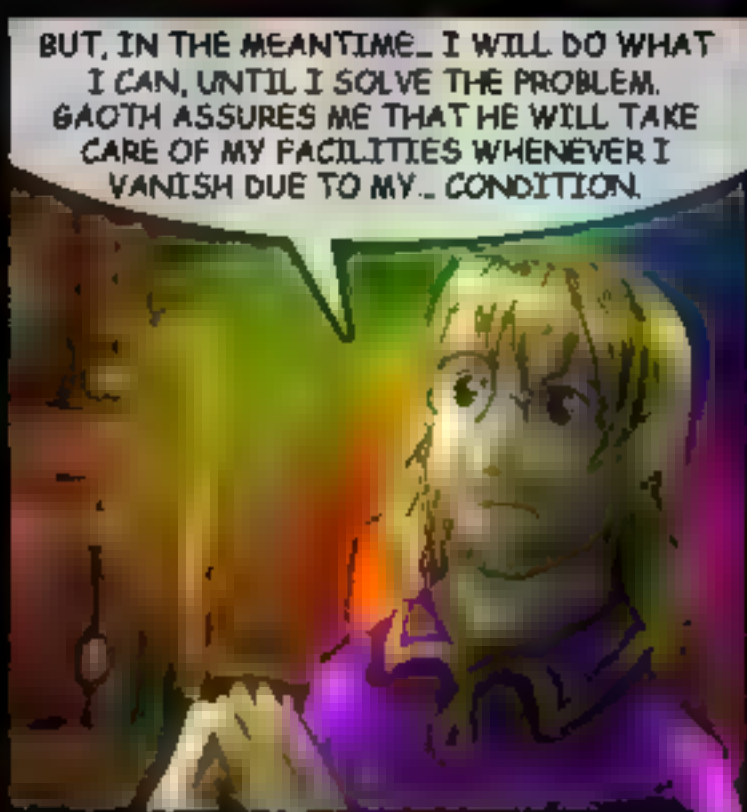
UNLIKELY

WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?



THE AMOUNT OF ENERGY IT WOULD TAKE TO SEND ME BACK ALONG THIS TIMELINE IS... ENORMOUS. IT WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE STABILITY OF THIS DIMENSION, LIKELY CAUSING ITS IMMINENT COLLAPSE.

OH.



BUT, IN THE MEANTIME... I WILL DO WHAT I CAN, UNTIL I SOLVE THE PROBLEM. GAOTH ASSURES ME THAT HE WILL TAKE CARE OF MY FACILITIES WHENEVER I VANISH DUE TO MY... CONDITION.

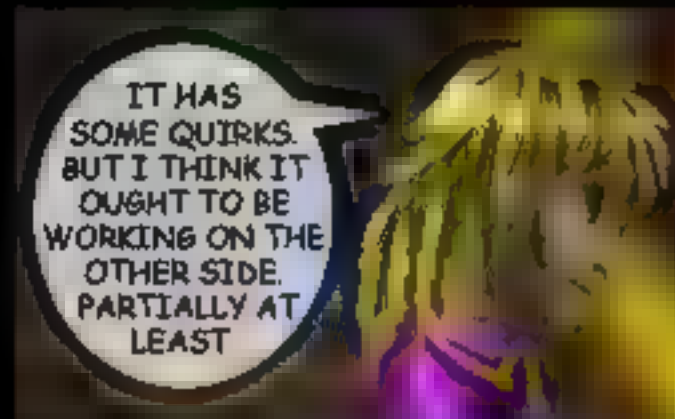


SAY, WHAT'S THIS?



AN INTRADIMENSIONAL WINDOW

BUT I DON'T SEE ANYTHING?



IT HAS
SOME QUIRKS.
BUT I THINK IT
OUGHT TO BE
WORKING ON THE
OTHER SIDE.
PARTIALLY AT
LEAST



OH? DOES
IT LOOK LIKE A MIRROR
OR SOMETHING ON THE
OTHER SIDE?



IT COULD... OR MAYBE, A TELEVISION SCREEN, A
BOOK COVER, WHO KNOWS! IT COULD EVEN BE
STATIC, LIKE A PHOTOGRAPH, OR BE LIKE A WEBCAM
OF SORTS, CHANGING ONLY ONCE IN A WHILE. I
JUST DON'T KNOW HOW WELL IT WORKS YET



ANYWAY...
THIS WAY.



THIS...
THIS IS A
CAGE.

WELL NO IT'S
A HOLDING ROOM. I'M SORRY I
DIDN'T FURNISH IT, BUT MY FUNDS
ARE SOMEWHAT LIMITED, AND I
CAN'T AFFORD FOR A NICE BED
TO GET TORN UP—



NO. NO I
WILL NEVER BE IN A
PRISON CELL AGAIN.
I AM NOT GOING IN
THERE!

IT'S NOT A PRISON,
IT'S MORE LIKE A LOW-COST
HOTEL ROOM. YOU CAN LEAVE IN
THE MORNING, I PROMISE YOU...
BUT IF YOU DON'T GO IN, YOU
COULD HURT PEOPLE...



NO, I'M NOT--

FAITH, YOU
COULD KILL YOUR
COWORKER. YOU COULD KILL
ME. DO YOU WANT TO
DO THAT?

NO, I... I...

FAITH, I'M SORRY

SHOVE

CRUNCH

CLICK!

LET ME OUT I...
I CAN'T DO THIS, I--

IT ISN'T EVEN DARK
YET... YOU SHOULDN'T BE...
AH. INDEED... SOME WEREWOLVES
TAKE A MONSTEROUS SHAPE WHEN
SUFFERING FROM BITE LUST, BUT THEY
CAN SLIP INTO IT FROM ANGER OR FEARS
WELL. MY EXPERIENCE IN THE PAST HAS
BEEN THAT IN SUCH INSTANCES, GRAHLL
TEND TO GET STUCK IN A RAGEFUL MODE
FOR A WHILE, SORT OF AS AN EXHAGGER-
ATED FIGHT-OR FLIGHT RESPONSE TRIG-
GERED BY THE BODY RELEASING AN
EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF--

SHUT UP AND LET ME
OUT!

WELL, YOU AREN'T
IN BITE LUST YET, OR YOU
WOULDN'T BE TALKING. THAT
SHOULD OCCUR AROUND
MOONRISE--

I SWEAR
TO GOD I'LL KICK
YOUR--

POP!

I THINK THAT PERHAPS I SHOULD
LEAVE YOU ALONE, I'M ONLY FURTHER
DISTRESSING YOU. I'LL CHECK ON YOU
IN TWO HOURS, I PROMISE

COME BACK AND LET ME OUT!

17x3620

SHOVE

Believe it or not I eventually did calm down.. kind of. Wh is the raw anger subsided, I was left wondering.. Was the bite-just what I should be worried about? I mean. Seamus was an [REDACTED] but I had wolfed out because I felt trapped and threatened. What if this happened again in normal life? Maybe I posed more of a danger to people than I had realized.

But then again yes I was freaking out badly and wh is I wolfed out a little.. I was okay. Though admittedly I tried to escape, I hadn't actually lashed out with the intent to harm. Surely if I could get through that without ripping people's spleens out that meant I was okay for most normal things, right?

Right?

But in the meantime.. I'll be careful.

Time passed on. The 'couple of hours' came and went and though my time sense wasn't so great, it had to at least have been four hours before Seamus finally showed up.

FANCY SEEING YOU HERE

FAITH,
I TRULY AM
SORRY I.. I
LOST SOME
TIME AND I'M
SORRY ABOUT
THROWING YOU
IN THERE BUT I
HAD TO DO IT,
YOU HAVE
TO TRUST
ME--

LOOK, BEFORE I CAME TO
[REDACTED] I DIDN'T MEANT HURTING
ANYONE... AND AFTER WHAT HAPPENED
[REDACTED]... I JUST... BEAR
WITH ME, OKAY?

SO... DO YOU WANT THE GOOD NEWS?

THERE'S GOOD NEWS?

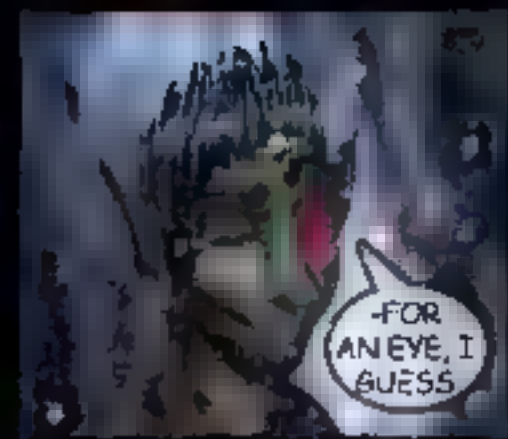
THE MOON'S UP
THERE'S NO BITE LUST IF YOU CAN
SHIFT BACK, I CAN LET YOU GO HOME, THOUGH.
I'D LIKE TO KEEP YOU OVERNIGHT IT SEEMS
YOU'LL GET IT TOMORROW OR THE NEXT NIGHT
INSTEAD. AND, NOW WE KNOW
THAT THE ROOM IS STRONG
ENOUGH TO HOLD YOU

FANTASTIC...

Thankfully, most of my irritation seemed to dwindle over the next several hours, waiting until I could become human again, partially thanks to clothes Maggie had brought by. But the time alone had given me more time to worry about things... like whether or not it was safe for me to walk alone. But then again I couldn't have someone with me at all times could I?

OKAY. IT'S NOT
THAT BIG A DEAL, JUST A WALK,
ALONE, THROUGH THE WOODS. I'VE DONE
IT ALONE A BUNCH OF TIMES. BAD THINGS
ONLY HAPPENED TWICE.
I'M OKAY







SO... WHAT ARE YOU?

Whatever he was, he was kinda... cute. Minus the claws and fangs and stuff

I'M... NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE.

I WAS ABOUT TO ASK YOU A SIMILAR QUESTION.

I'M A VAMPIRE. WELL, TECHNICALLY, A NEOREVNANT, BUT VAMPIRE IS WHAT EVERYONE SAYS.

NOT THE ANSWER I WAS LOOKING FOR. I'M A WERE-WOLF. NOW STILL

THE SUN WILL BE UP SOON.

YEAH.

WHY AREN'T YOU RUNNING OFF? I THOUGHT VAMPIRES CAN'T STAND SUNLIGHT.

THAT'S ONLY A FEW VARIETIES, LIKE THE STRIGORII. NOW ME WHEN I'M IN THE SUNLIGHT, THAT'S THE ONLY TIME I--

LOOK, UH, YOU'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE GAOTH--

YEAH. THE LOCAL OBERON. LIKE ALL THE FAE, HAS A CERTAIN DISLIKE FOR OUR KIND

WHY IS THAT?

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THE FAE... WELL... WE'RE NOT SURE BUT WE THINK THE FAE HOPE TO REVEAL THEMSELVES TO MANKIND AGAIN. THAT THEY'RE WAITING FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT TO DO SO. VAMPIRES LIKE ME THRIVE IN A WORLD WHERE PEOPLE DON'T BELIEVE IN MAGIC, AND WOULD TO THE FAE MAKE RE-INTRODUCING THE WORLD TO MAGIC MORE... TROUBLESOME

BECAUSE YOU PREY ON PEOPLE

DO YOU?

A LOT OF US DO. YEAH.

SOMETIMES.

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

I. I MADE A MISTAKE LAST FALL I CAME HERE TO MAKE SURE THERE WERE NO... LOOSE ENDS

FALL... WAIT! YOU! YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GHOULS!

IN A WAY?

IN A WAY, YES.

I'M... NEW TO BEING A VAMPIRE. EVERYONE ELSE SEEMED PERFECTLY ADJUSTED AND HERE I WAS, ALL AWKWARD AND... AND I WAS LONELY. I... I GOT IN TROUBLE BUT I TURNED MY BEST FRIEND, SO I COULD HAVE SOMEONE TO GO THROUGH THE ADJUSTMENT PERIOD WITH. BUT SHE COULDN'T HANDLE IT. SOME PEOPLE... DON'T TURN WELL, SOMETHING IS LOST. SHE THEN WENT AND TURNED ALL OF HER FRIENDS... BUT KEPT THEM A SECRET. SHE THOUGHT SHE COULD KEEP THEM FED. KEEP THEM TO HERSELF... SHE WAS WRONG. THEY DEGENERATED INTO GHOULS AND ESCAPED.

GRR, THAT WAS A HELL OF A MESS WE HAD TO CLEAN UP...

MAN, I WAS THE FIRST ONE TO ENCOUNTER THEM. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANY LOOSE ENDS. YOU... CREEP. WE TOOK CARE OF THEM.

OH GOD, I HOPE YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO—

YOU DID? I... I'M SO SORRY AND... AND OH THANK YOU. THANK YOU SO MUCH. I... IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO MAKE IT UP TO YOU?

PFFT. NOT UNLESS YOU CAN ENSURE MY SAFETY FROM CREEPY STALKER WEREWOLVES. MAKE IT SO I NEVER HAVE TO SHAPESHIFT EVER AGAIN, AND TELL ME THE NAME OF THE WOLF WHO BIT ME IN THE FIRST PLACE. NOPE.

I... THE FIRST TWO I CAN'T HELP WITH BUT... BUT THAT LAST ONE? YEAH... MAYBE I CAN HELP. TELL YA WHAT... TELL ME EVERYTHING. ANY DETAILS YOU CAN THINK OF. I HAVE RESOURCES. I'LL DO SOME SLEUTHING. I CAN PROBABLY GET A FRIEND OR TWO ON IT AS WELL.

And... and I told him, in hindsight it was... pretty stupid probably. But at the time I thought it probably couldn't hurt, since the trail had long gone cold with Todd and I. I told him the date, time of night, what the weather was like, how it wasn't a full moon, what the werewolf looked like, everything. I told him about trying to track him later, about how he showed back up at a later date...

(C) SMG 14 NASHOBA HOSTINA NASHOBA-HOSTINA.DEVIANTART.COM

OKAY HOW ABOUT I SWING BY IN A COUPLE OF DAYS. I'LL MEET YOU AT THE EDGE OF THE WOODS. THAT'S CLOSE TO THE BORDER. SO THINGS OUGHT TO BE OKAY

UM I'M KIND OF BUSY

WHY?

SCHOOL AND FULL MOON STUFF

OOOOOHH.
UM. CATCH YOU IN A WEEK THEN?

SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN. I'M FAITH BY THE WAY

I'M SAM.

However the next two nights, nothing unusual happened. I didn't even feel the need to shift

I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND. I WONDER IF YOU'RE HAVING A DELAYED RESPONSE DUE TO ALL OF THE STRESS YOU'RE UNDER, OR, PERHAPS, BECAUSE OF YOUR UNUSUAL HERITAGE, OR THE PREMATURE TIMING OF YOUR BITE, OR

SURE SEAMUS

MAYBE JUST BE CAREFUL

OR MAYBE IT JUST WON'T HAPPEN AT ALL!

BE CAREFUL... SHEESH.



HEY! LOOKS LIKE EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE OKAY HUH?

YEP

I SAW SOME CUTE GUY IN THERE WHEN THE DOOR WAS OPEN. WHO WAS THAT?

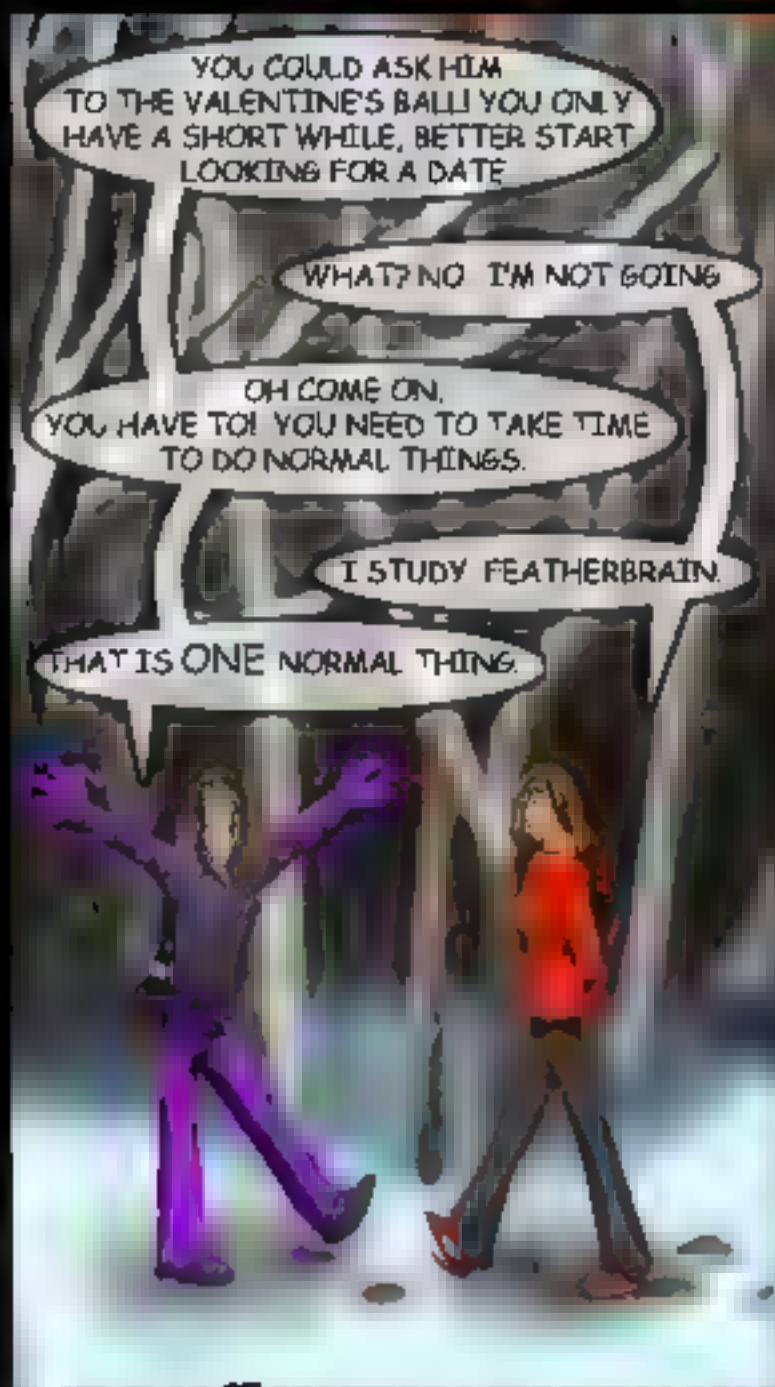


THAT'S MY COWORKER, JAY, IF YOU'D BELIEVE IT TURNS OUT HE GOT A SECOND JOB WITH SEAMUS



HEY! YOU KNOW WHAT YOU COULD DO?

WHAT MAGGIE?



YOU COULD ASK HIM TO THE VALENTINE'S BALL! YOU ONLY HAVE A SHORT WHILE, BETTER START LOOKING FOR A DATE

WHAT? NO I'M NOT GOING

OH COME ON, YOU HAVE TO! YOU NEED TO TAKE TIME TO DO NORMAL THINGS.

I STUDY FEATHERBRAIN.

THAT IS ONE NORMAL THING.



AND WHO THE HECK ARE YOU GOING WITH? LAST I CHECKED YOU WERE SINGLE?

I'M GOING WITH DYLAN.

DYLAN? BUT HE'S...

WE'RE GOING AS FRIENDS. SILEY WOLF

WHATEVER

A few evenings later I met with Sam

SAM? SAM! ARE YOU OUT HERE?

SHHHH, KEEP IT DOWN, WILL YA? DON'T LET THE WHOLE WORLD KNOW WE'RE HERE!

OH! YOU LOOK

NORMAL.
YEAH. WE ONLY LOOK WEIRD AT NIGHT

NORMAL...
YEAH, SO, UM... ANY INFO?

OH! WELL, MY SIRE KNOWS A WEREWOLF WHO WORKS AT CAMP HERO FUNNY, SHE FIRST ARRIVED THERE AS A PRISONER, IF YOU'D BELIEVE IT, IN THE JUVI WING. YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT CAMP HERO OF COURSE—

ACTUALLY NO

OH. WELL, IT'S AN ABANDONED MILITARY BASE THAT WE VAMPIRES TOOK OVER AND TURNED INTO A PRISON FOR TROUBLESOME ELDRITCH FOLK. SOMETIMES MUNDANE FOLKS WANDER IN AND THE SOME OF THE MORE TALENTED VAMPIRES ON DUTY HAVE TO... WELL. TWEAK THEIR MEMORIES, IF THEY SAW ANYTHING ODD. FUNNY THING. THE FOLKS WHO REALIZE THAT SOMETHING HAPPENED TEND TO BLAME THE GOVERNMENT FOR IT CALLING IT THE MONTAUK PROJECT AND—

OKAY, BUT DID THIS WEREWOLF KNOW ANYTHING?

TURNS OUT SHE'S FROM THIS AREA. ENFORCER PHELAN SAID THAT THE WOLF YOU DESCRIBED SOUNDED LIKE HER OLD FRIEND... BUT SHE HADN'T HEARD FROM HIM IN AGES. SHE WAS PRETTY BUSY AT THE TIME THOUGH... TAKING IN A MANGY WEREWOLF WHO'D CAUSED SOME PROBLEMS FOR THE ROOGAROO DOWN SOUTH.

BENANDANTI?

I THINK THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID. SOMEONE YOU KNOW?

YOU COULD SAY THAT

WELL, I HATE TO TELL YA THIS, BUT HE LOOKED LIKE HE WAS IN BAD SHAPE. I HEARD HIM SAY SOMETHING ABOUT HOW HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS LEFT WHO COULD TRAVEL, SOBBING ABOUT HOW EVERYTHING WAS RUINED, BLATHERING ABOUT THE END OF THINGS, IT WAS A MESS.

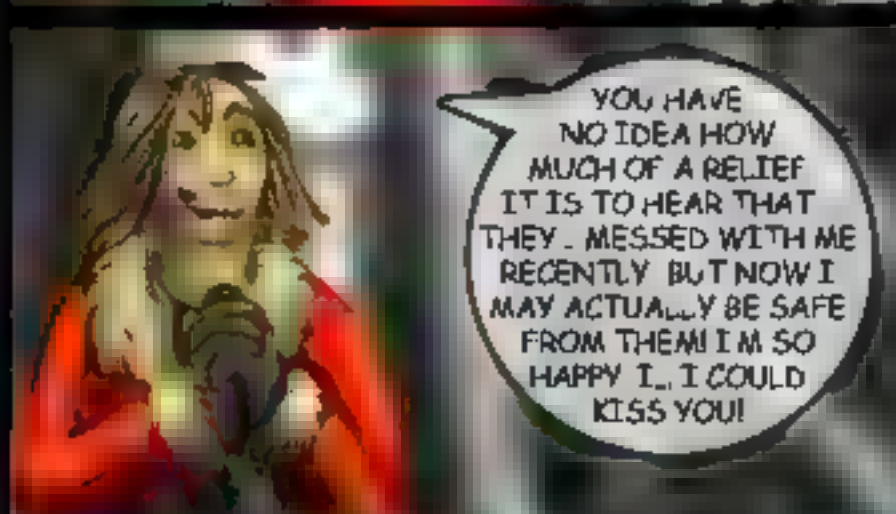


OH MY GOSH, THAT'S AMAZING!

I... MISSED SOMETHING.



YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH OF A RELIEF IT IS TO HEAR THAT THEY MESS'D WITH ME RECENTLY BUT NOW I MAY ACTUALLY BE SAFE FROM THEM! I'M SO HAPPY I... I COULD KISS YOU!



I... I NEED TO GO DO SOME HOMEWORK.

... YEAH, I SHOULD GO TOO. CATCH YA A WEEK FROM NOW?

YEAH... CATCH YOU THEN.



I... whether or not he had news for me, I found myself so excited to see him again. In fact - a week just seemed to be an impossibly long time.



FAITH, WHAT IS WITH YOU? YOU'VE BEEN STARING OUT THAT WINDOW ALL DAY

HA? OH, NOTHING.

AT LEAST YOU AREN'T STRESSING OUT AS BAD. YOU'VE HAD THREE FULL NIGHT'S SLEEP

YEAH. I JUST FEEL SAFER I GUESS.

YEAH WHAT WITH ALL OF THE EXTRA PATROLS TODD'S DOING—

HUH?

PATROLS. REMEMBER? HE HELPS GAOTH OUT BY KEEPING THE BAD GUYS OUT? THAT'S WHY HE'S BEEN GONE SO MUCH LATELY. HE'S TRACING ALL OF THE LEY LINES AROUND HERE, MAKING SURE THE BENANDANTI DON'T COME THROUGH—

SO, HE'S NOT PATROLLING THE BORDERS?

NOT AS MUCH AS HE USED TO

OKAY

YOU'RE ACTING WEIRD

GOOD POINT

SAID THE CROW-TENGU TO THE WEREWOLF

With Todd looking for benandanti that apparently would never be coming.. maybe that meant that things were safer for Sam and I to meet. Maybe.. maybe we could hang out more.

(C) SMG-14 NASHOBA HOSTINA NASHOBA-HOSTINA.DEVIANTART.COM

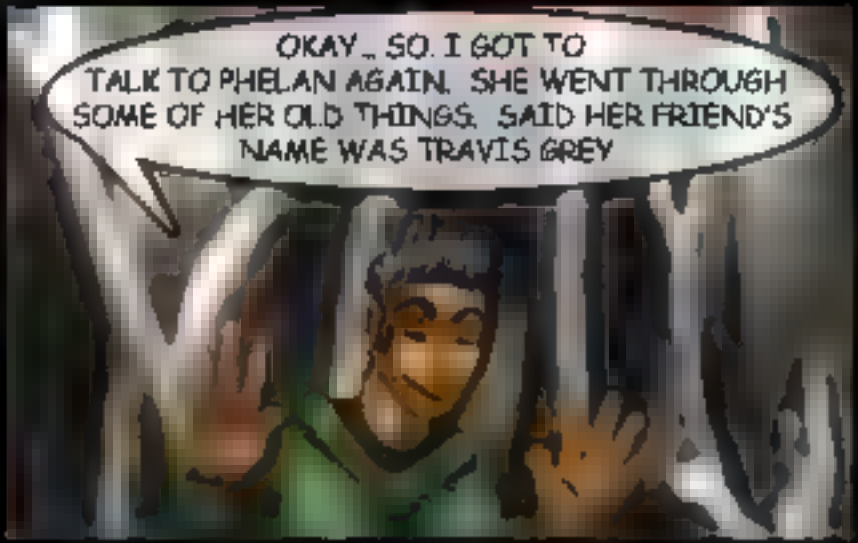


BOO!

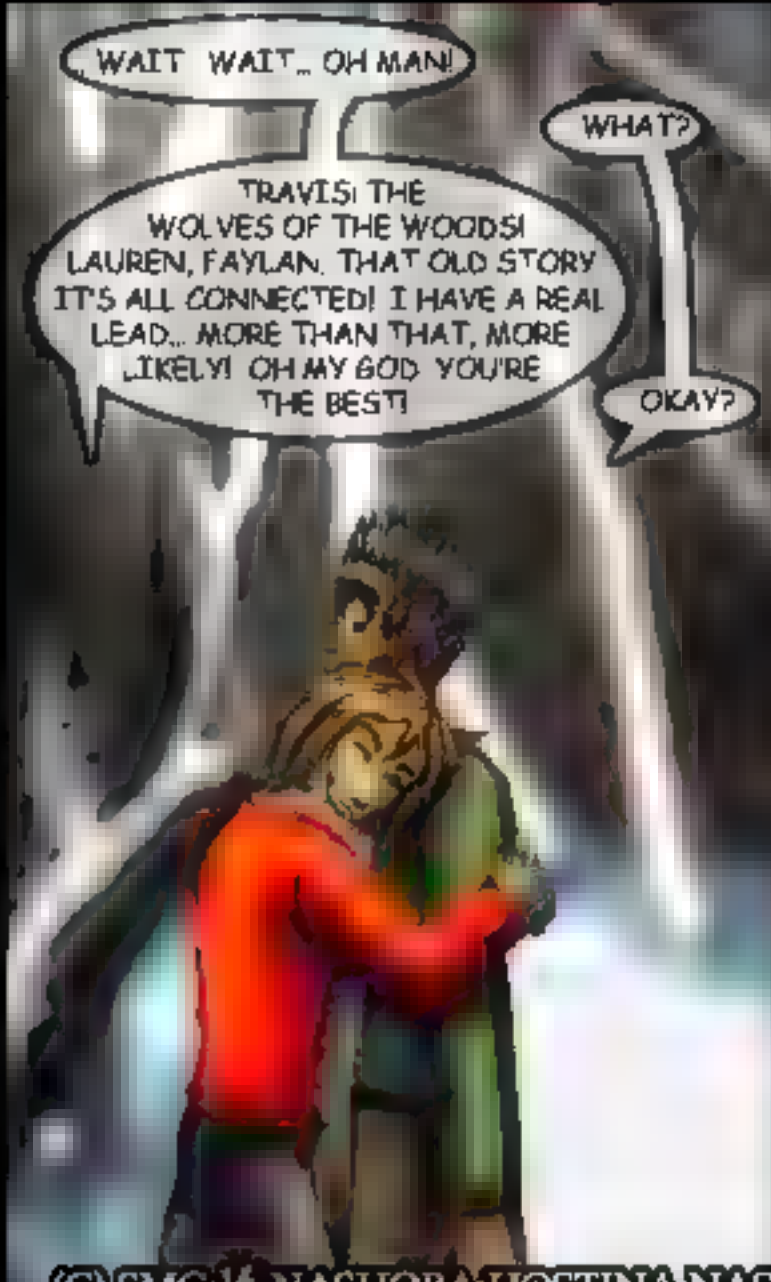
AUGH! YOU SHOULDNT SCARE A WEREWOLF!



WHAT ARE YA GONNA DO, SHED ALL OVER ME?



OKAY.. SO. I GOT TO TALK TO PHELAN AGAIN. SHE WENT THROUGH SOME OF HER OLD THINGS. SAID HER FRIEND'S NAME WAS TRAVIS GREY



WAIT WAIT... OH MAN!

TRAVIS! THE WOLVES OF THE WOODS! LAUREN, FAYLAN. THAT OLD STORY IT'S ALL CONNECTED! I HAVE A REAL LEAD... MORE THAN THAT, MORE LIKELY! OH MY GOD YOU'RE THE BEST!

WHAT?

OKAY?



LOOK, I KNOW TECHNICALLY YOU SHOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE BUT I WAS WONDERING IF YOU..

.. IF I, UH, WHAT?

IF YOU'D BE MY DATE FOR THE VALENTINE'S DANCE IN A FEW DAYS. AND.. MAYBE GO ON A FEW DATES AFTER THAT

.. ARE YOU ASKING ME TO BE YOUR BOYFRIEND?



WELL, I JH.

UM... FAITH...

WHAT?



I DON'T UM... SWING THAT WAY



I... YOU...

... OH

GIRLS
JUST DON'T DO IT
FOR ME

FAITH, I.

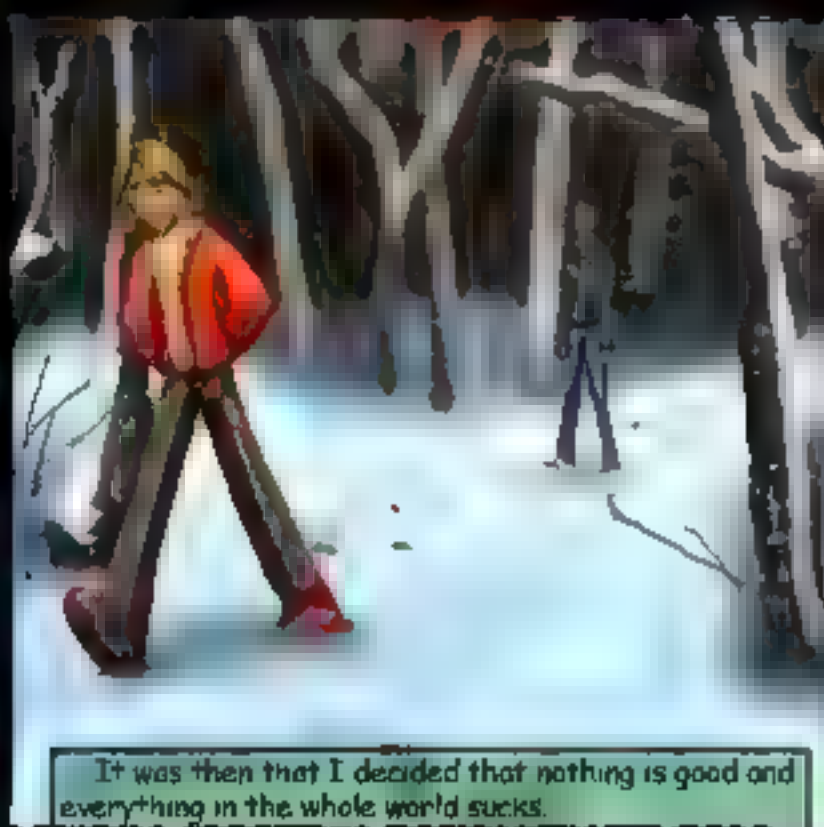


THANKS FOR THE UPDATE SAM. I.
I'LL GIVE YOU MORE TIME TO GET
SOME INFO. CATCH YOU NEXT
FULL MOON. I'M SORRY,
BUT I GOTTA GO.



FAITH, WAIT--

I HAVE HOMEWORK TO DO
SAM. I'LL SEE YOU LATER.



It was then that I decided that nothing is good and
everything in the whole world sucks.

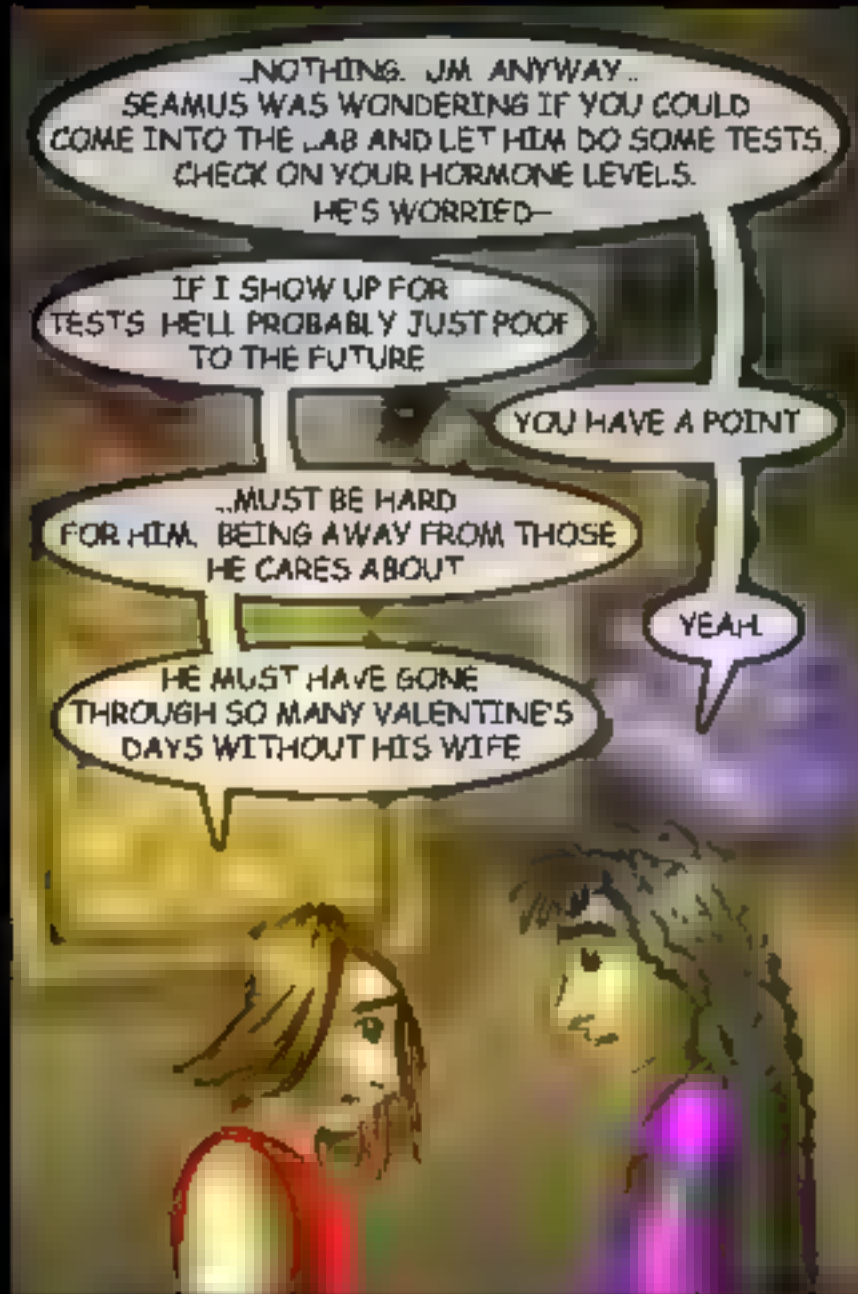


FAITH? ARE YOU STILL IN BED? I THOUGHT YOU HAD CLASS TODAY

I DID

WHAT ABOUT IT, MAGGIE?

YOU CUT CLASS?



..NOTHING. JM ANYWAY.. SEAMUS WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD COME INTO THE LAB AND LET HIM DO SOME TESTS. CHECK ON YOUR HORMONE LEVELS. HE'S WORRIED—

IF I SHOW UP FOR TESTS HE'LL PROBABLY JUST POOF TO THE FUTURE

YOU HAVE A POINT

..MUST BE HARD FOR HIM. BEING AWAY FROM THOSE HE CARES ABOUT

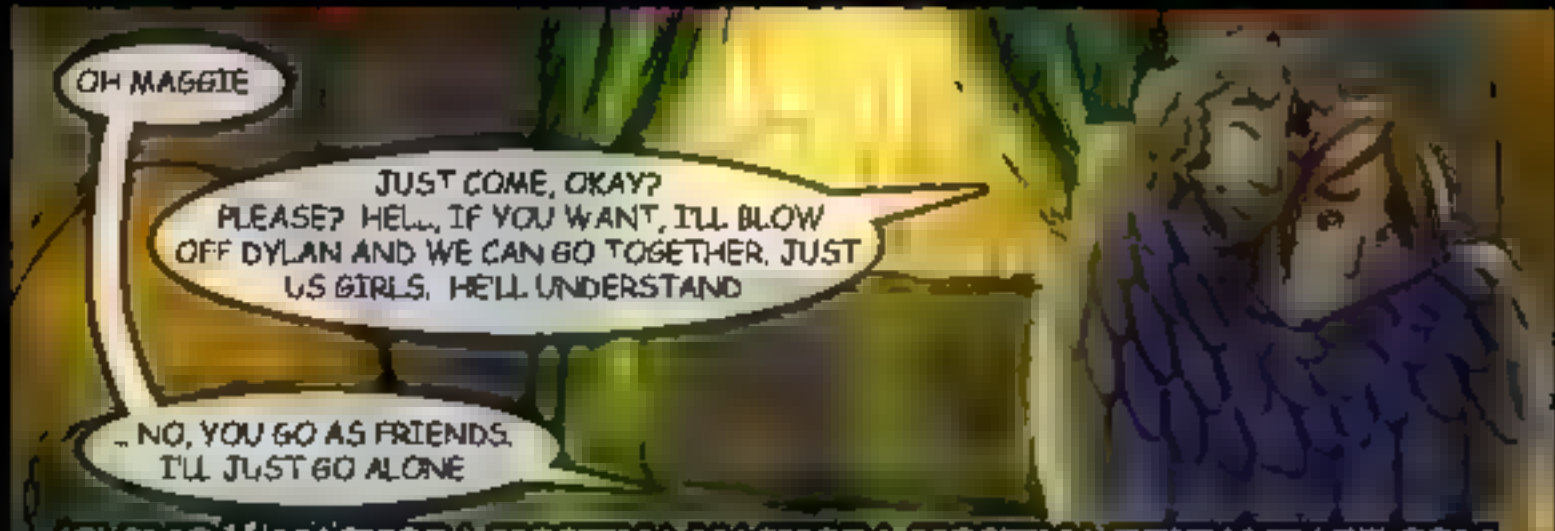
YEAH

HE MUST HAVE GONE THROUGH SO MANY VALENTINE'S DAYS WITHOUT HIS WIFE



SPEAKING OF WHICH I.. UM.. I KNOW YOU HAVEN'T ASKED ANYONE TO GO WITH YOU BUT I GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU TO WEAR TO THE DANCE

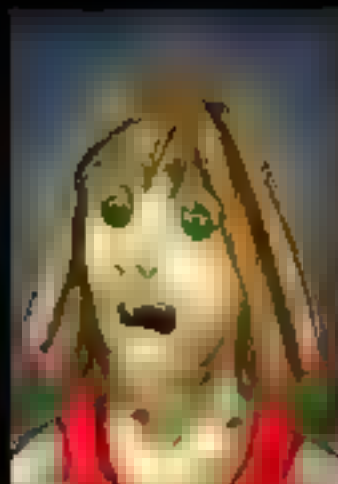
TODD AND DYLAN HELPED PAY FOR IT TOO. WE ALL JUST WANT YOU TO GO HAVE A GOOD TIME



OH MAGGIE

JUST COME, OKAY? PLEASE? HELLO, IF YOU WANT, I'LL BLOW OFF DYLAN AND WE CAN GO TOGETHER. JUST US GIRLS. HE'LL UNDERSTAND

..NO, YOU GO AS FRIENDS. I'LL JUST GO ALONE



OH MY GOD.

OH MY GOD
IS RIGHT, YOU NEED TO
GET DRESSED!

NO, MAGGIE, LOOK!



IT'S SENATOR GREY
I SEE HIM ON THE NEWS ON YOUR COMPUTER
SOMETIMES... HE VISITED THE COLLEGE LAST
YEAR. WHAT ABOUT HIM?

HIS FIRST NAME IS TRAVIS

SO?

HE VISITED
LATE LAST SEPTEMBER

YEAH?



MAGGIE I THINK THIS IS THE GUY THAT
BIT ME. REMEMBER THAT ABOUT THE
WOLVES? REMEMBER LAUREN IN THE
ROOGAROO SETTLEMENT? IT MAKES
SENSE MAGGIE.

JM. NO WHY
WOULD HE BITE YOU?

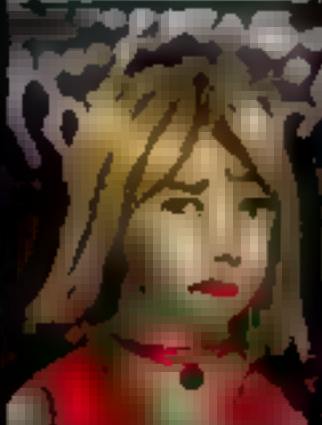


THAT'S SOMETHING
I'M GONNA HAVE TO ASK HIM



NOT NOW YOU AREN'T!
YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH EVIDENCE AND
YOU'RE GOING TO A DANCE!

I hate dances



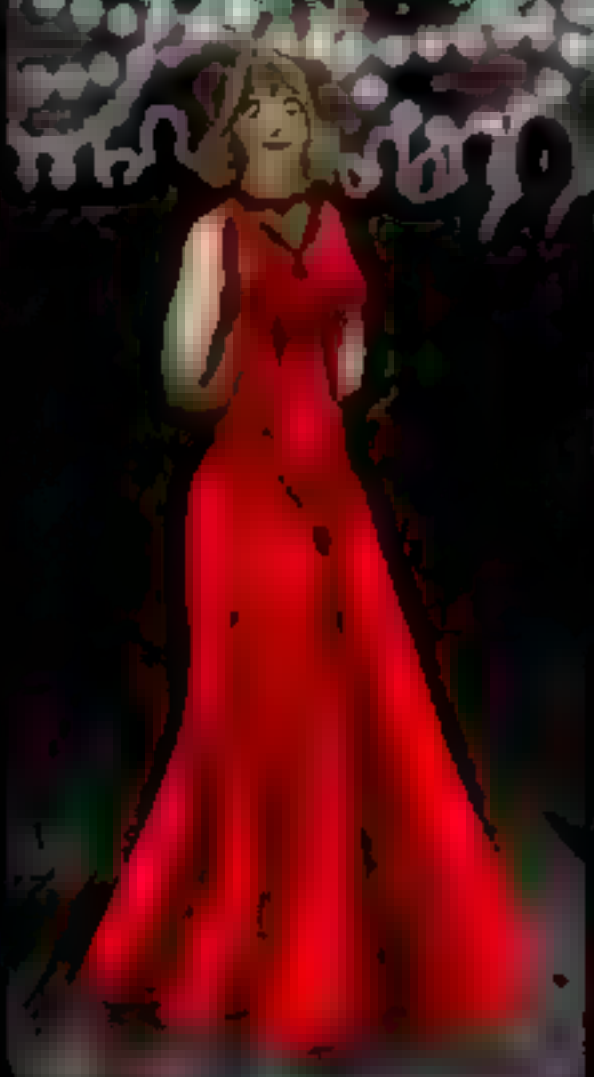
I hate valentine's Day



Valentine's Day dance? Well, let's just say that If Maggie hadn't been so insistent, I would have stayed home



The dress was nice though



I'm a lot more social than I used to be. But both dances and Valentines seem to stigmatize those who are alone. Alone isn't a bad thing. I've spent most of my life alone. And it was awesome. I was never one to have a lot of friends until recently. I dated a couple of guys in high school, but it was more of an experiment than love. It never lasted and that was okay. Being alone can be refreshing and full of blissful solitude.



That is, unless people are looking down on you, or god forbid, pitying you for your lack of companionship. Or worse when there actually is someone you really, desperately want to be with, but you can't. Or... or when they don't want you.

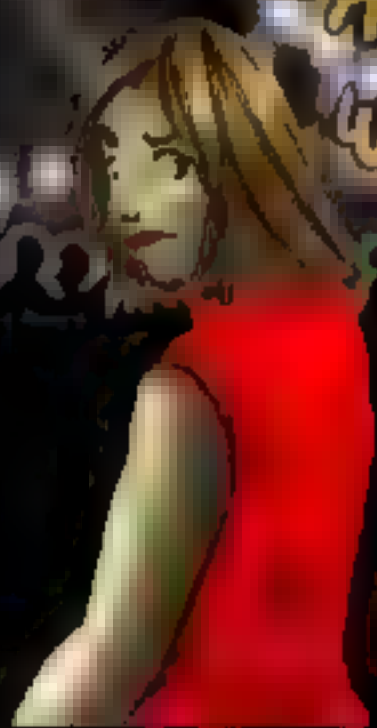


On second thought I was wrong



Alone is the worst

WHY?
WHY?



EXCUSE ME

I NOTICED YOU
STANDING BY YOURSELF, AND I WAS
WONDERING IF PERHAPS YOU'D CARE
TO DANCE?

MAYBE
WE SHOULD START WITH
'HELLO?'

Oh. Oh wow Hey brain.
Words. I need words

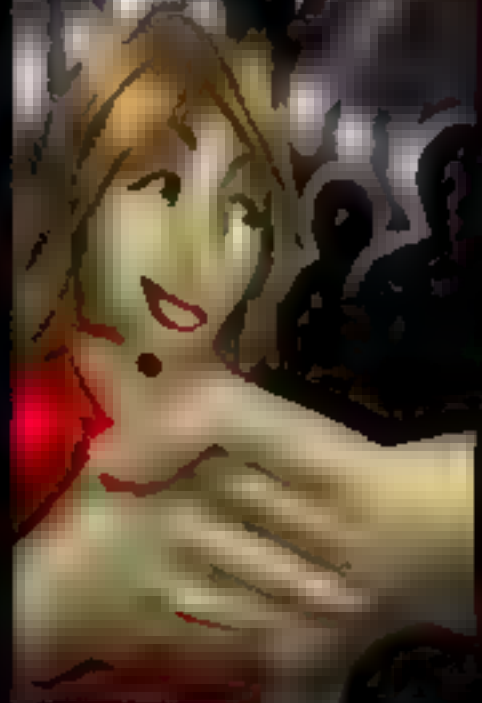
UH



HELLO.
MAY WE DANCE?

I, UM SURE
I MEAN, YES

HI



This guy... this guy is... not bad to look at
That probably means that he's a jerk. The
good looking ones are always jerks.

Sam isn't a jerk

Who is this guy anyway? Oh hey! I could
ask! That's a good thing to do. That's what
you do when you meet people, right?

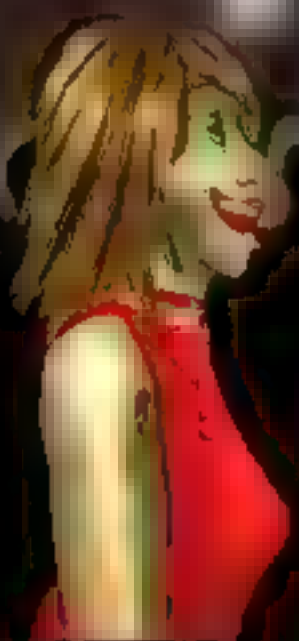
SO... WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

ERRRRRRRRRRRRRRR. UM...

YOUR NAME IS UM?

NO! IT'S... HARRY

HA, LIKE HARRY POTTER?



YEAH, LIKE
HARRY POTTER.

One dance turned into
another... and another

And another



WOULD YOU CARE TO GO GET SOME FRESH AIR? GO FOR A WALK, MAYBE?

I wanted to go. I really did. But, well... There are risks to leaving a dance to go for a walk with.

Wait. Who am I kidding? I'm a goddamn werewolf. If he tries anything, he be in for a big surprise.

THAT SOUNDS GREAT

.. NO, NO IT'S TOTALLY TRUE THEY'D RUN AROUND STARK NAKED, SLAPPING PEOPLE WITH STRIPS OF GOAT SKIN. THE ORIGINAL VALENTINE'S DAY WAS A FERTILITY FESTIVAL, LUPERCALIA. I LEARNED ALL ABOUT IT BEFORE MY FRIEND AND I MOVED ACROSS THE POND TO QUEBEC.

MAN, SEEMS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN ALL OVER

I HAVE HECK, EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE I STILL GET TO GO VISIT MY FAMILY IN FRANCE. YOU'D LIKE IT THERE I BET

HOW DID YOU WIND UP HERE?

JAM BUSINESS

WELL I GUESS I'M LUCKY YOU HAVE BUSINESS HERE

REALLY?

OTHERWISE I'D HAVE SPENT THE NIGHT LEANING AGAINST THE WALL AND SULKING BECAUSE THE ONE GUY I ASKED DIDN'T COME WITH ME

YOU YOU ASKED SOMEONE? WHO?



TODD??

FAITH I CAN EXPLAIN-

WHAT THE FRESH HELL IS THIS? I THOUGHT YOU HAD NO HUMAN FORM?

I DONT RRR, GAOTH PUT A GLAMOUR ON ME SO I'D LOOK AND SOUND DIFFERENT HE SAID IT'D LAST UNTIL MIDNIGHT... HE DID IT AS A FAVOR BECAUSE I'VE BEEN DOING ALL OF THESE EXTRA PATROLS TO MAKE SURE THE BENANDANTI ARENT CRAWLING AROUND OVER HERE

BUT WHY?

BECAUSE . BECAUSE I THOUGHT THAT IF I LOOKED HUMAN, YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN ME FAITH, I'D MEANT TO TELL YOU WHO I WAS AT THE STARRRT, BUT I... I LOST MY NERVE. AND THEN I DIDNT KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU..

TODD YOU'RE A WOLF I'M A HUMAN. WE JUST ARENT COMPATIBLE AND--

YOU'RE A WEREWOLF TECHNICALLY WE



OH, THANKS FOR REMINDING ME OF THAT CHEERFUL LITTLE FACT GREAT WAY TO WOO SOMEONE--

NO, NO, YOU'RE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOLF I'VE MET LOOK FAITH, I KNOW THAT I OGLE ALL THE GIRLS BUT , RRRR I THINK I LOVE YOU

SO YOU PUT TOGETHER THIS LITTLE CHARADE? LOOK, TODD, I DUNNO HOW WOLVES GO ABOUT ROMANCE BUT THIS--WHAT WERE YOU THINKING? YOU DONT LIE TO SOMEONE YOU WANT TO BE WITH. YOU DONT TRICK SOMEONE INTO BEING CLOSE WITH YOU. PEOPLE DONT DO THINGS LIKE THAT TO PEOPLE THEY LOVE





A GUY NAMED SAM

HE'S NOT REALLY
FROM AROUND HERE

HM. I DON'T KNOW HIM

INTO LONG DISTANCE
RELATIONSHIPS, HUH, FAITH?

NOT REALLY I

WAIT...



I NEVER GAVE YOU MY NAME



UM... SURE YOU DID, RRRIGHT
AFTER YOU ASKED MY NAME

NO NO I DIDN'T!

RRRRRRREALLY YOU DID!

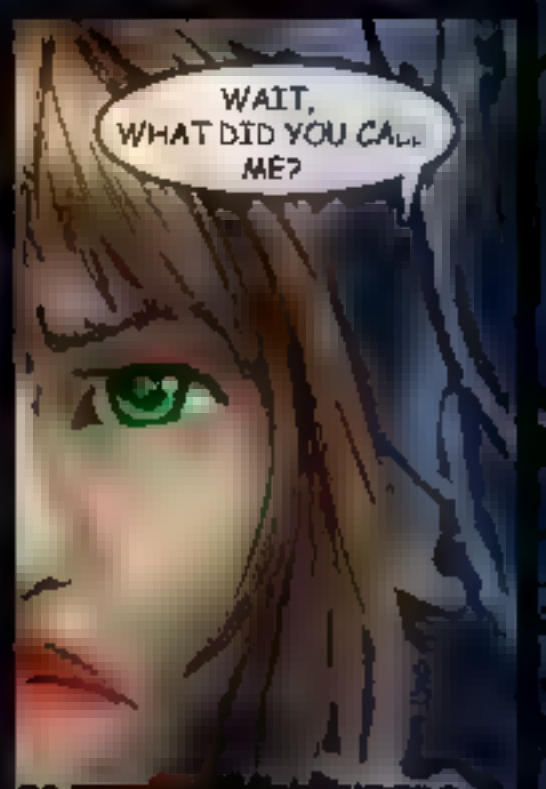


WHO ARE YOU? HOW DO
YOU KNOW MY NAME?



NOW RED, CALM DOWN, OKAY?

I WILL NOT CALM DOWN, I



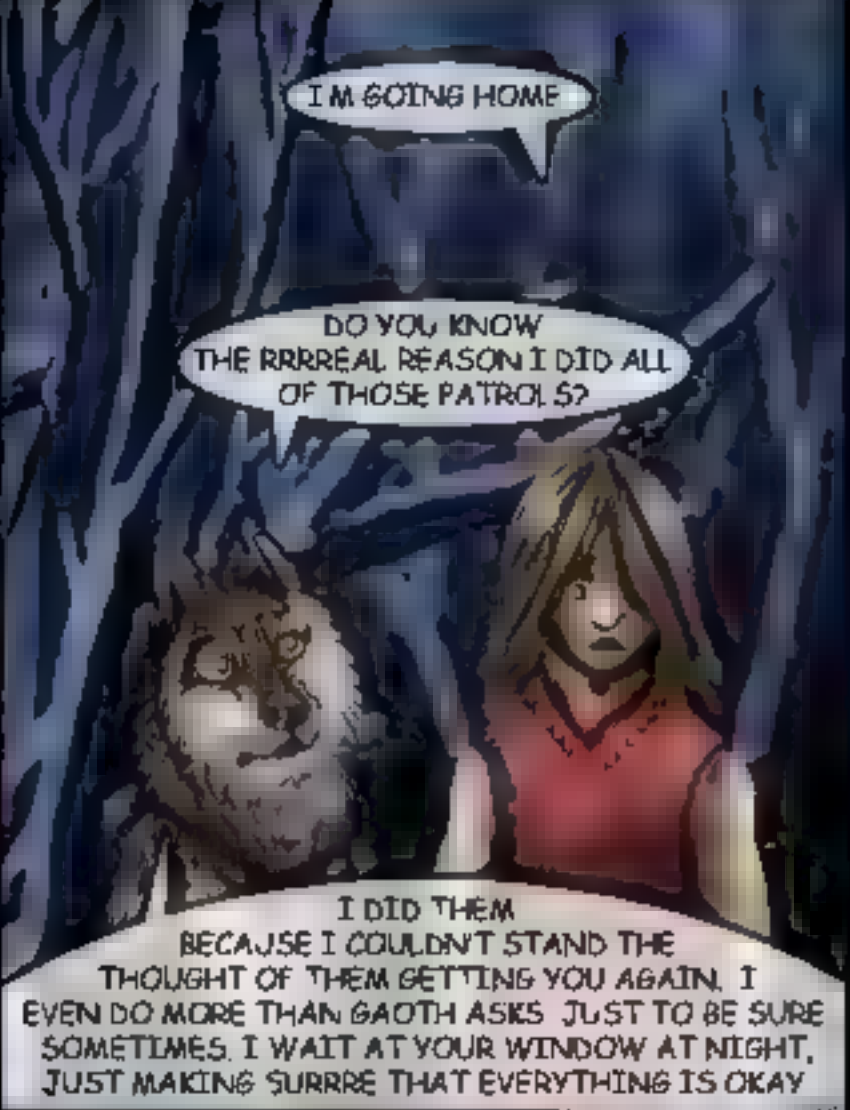
WAIT,
WHAT DID YOU CALL
ME?



IT WAS JUST FORRRR A NIGHT

THAT DOESNT
EXCUSE YOU FOR YOUR
BEHAVIOR!

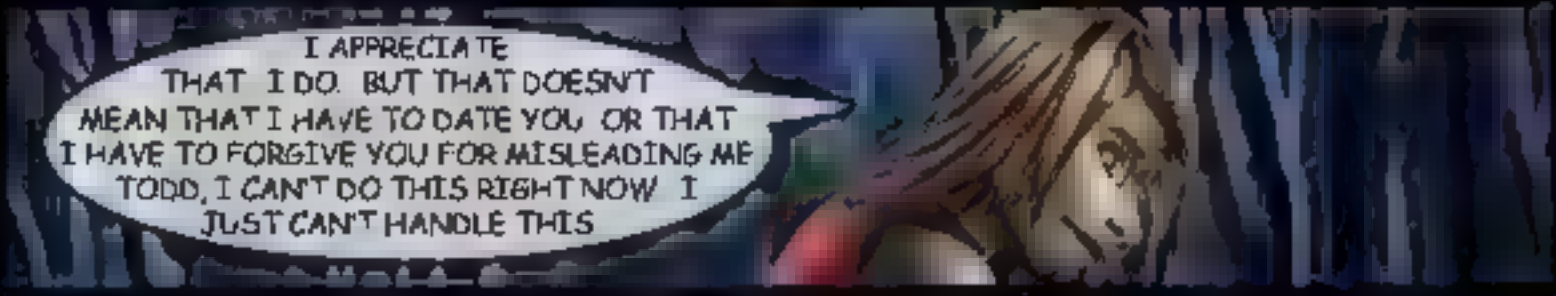
RED I



I'M GOING HOME

DO YOU KNOW
THE RRRREAL REASON I DID ALL
OF THOSE PATROLS?

I DID THEM
BECAUSE I COULDN'T STAND THE
THOUGHT OF THEM GETTING YOU AGAIN. I
EVEN DO MORE THAN GAOTH ASKS JUST TO BE SURE
SOMETIMES. I WAIT AT YOUR WINDOW AT NIGHT,
JUST MAKING SURRE THAT EVERYTHING IS OKAY



I APPRECIATE
THAT I DO. BUT THAT DOESNT
MEAN THAT I HAVE TO DATE YOU OR THAT
I HAVE TO FORGIVE YOU FOR MISLEADING ME
TODD, I CANT DO THIS RIGHT NOW I
JUST CANT HANDLE THIS



PLEASE



AROOOOO

I kind of hid after that, tried to work out my thoughts... but when the full moon came, I had to venture out to meet Sam.

FAITH, ARE YOU SURE? I MEAN, WE ALMOST ALWAYS SPEND FULL MOONS TOGETHER.

I JUST NEED SOME ALONE TIME, OKAY?

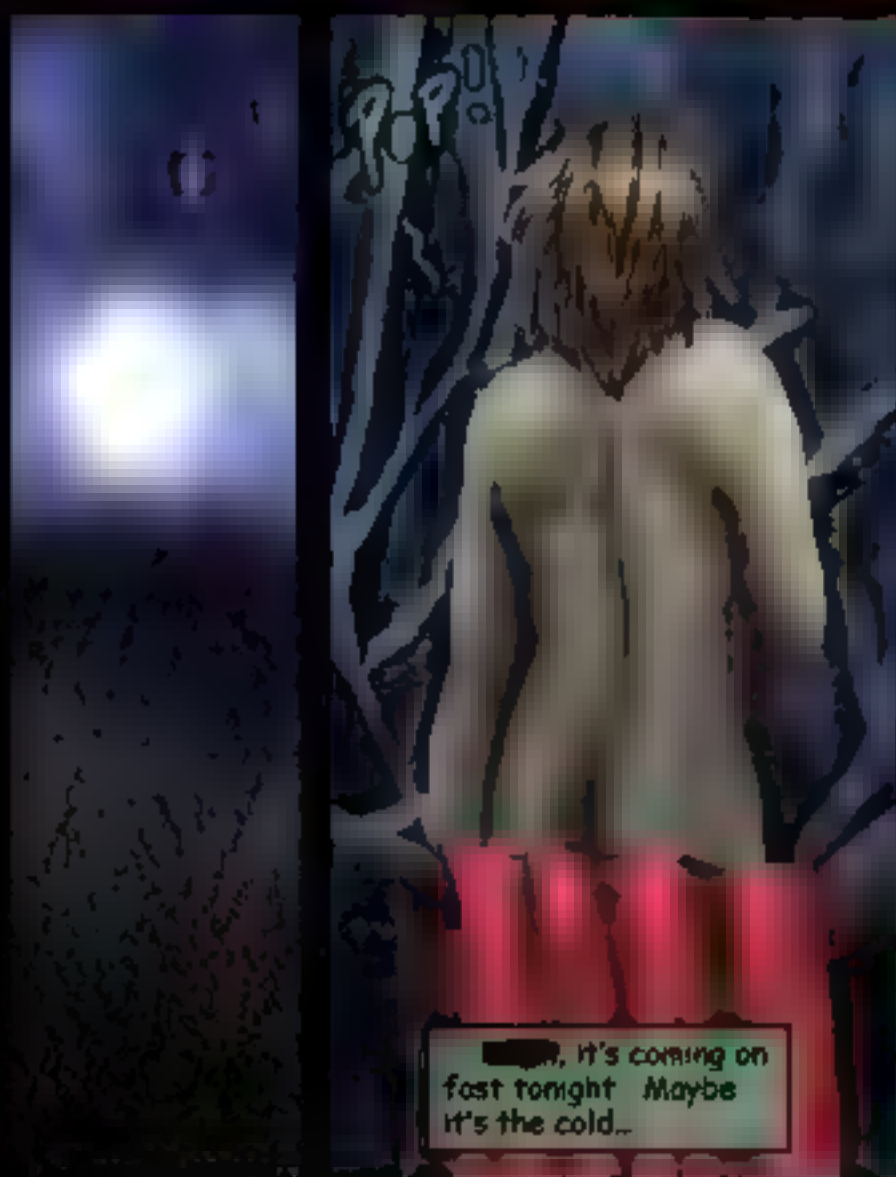
YOU KNOW WE DIDN'T KNOW, RIGHT? WE JUST THOUGHT YOU'D PICKED UP SOME NICE GUY... HE'S REALLY SORRY



MAGGIE, YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG. I'M NOT MAD AT YOU. I JUST NEED TO SPEND SOME TIME BY MYSELF



WELL... IF YOU GET LONELY, HOWL I'LL WING MY WAY TO WHEREVER YOU ARE



...It's coming on fast tonight Maybe it's the cold...



HHHURKCH!

PA-PA-SNAP!

GRUNCH

POP

POP
GRIND
KRAK

GRNCH

SNAP

RRROOOOOO

GRRRRRR

AH, THERE YOU ARE! LOOK, I DID SOME DIGGING, AND AS IT TURNS OUT, THE THE SENATOR—



FAITH?

HEY, TALK TO ME, WHAT'S WRONG?

FAITH. FAITH IT'S ME

KAWRF

The smell wasn't good. Too tangy. But it was close enough. He was fast... hard to catch, but fast is good. Everything was good. The moon lit my way, casting everything in brilliant silver light, all the better to hunt by. My prey was quiet... almost silent were it not for the faint rustle of leaves as he moved. By contrast I was noisy... but there was no need for stealth now. My quarry knew I was there... and the sharp scent on the air told me something else: He was afraid.

FAITH, WHAT'S
WRONG WITH YOU? SNAP
OUT OF IT!

Sounds
Words, I
thought, but
they were...
unimportant
I would worry
about them

was done.

YOU! VAMPIRE
SCUM! WHAT ARE YOU
DOING HERE?

THERE'S
SOMETHING WRONG
WITH HER!

SLIDE

Why? Why was he
in my way? He was my...
packmate, but This was
my catch! Mine! My
teeth... they itched. I
longed to sink them
into flesh.

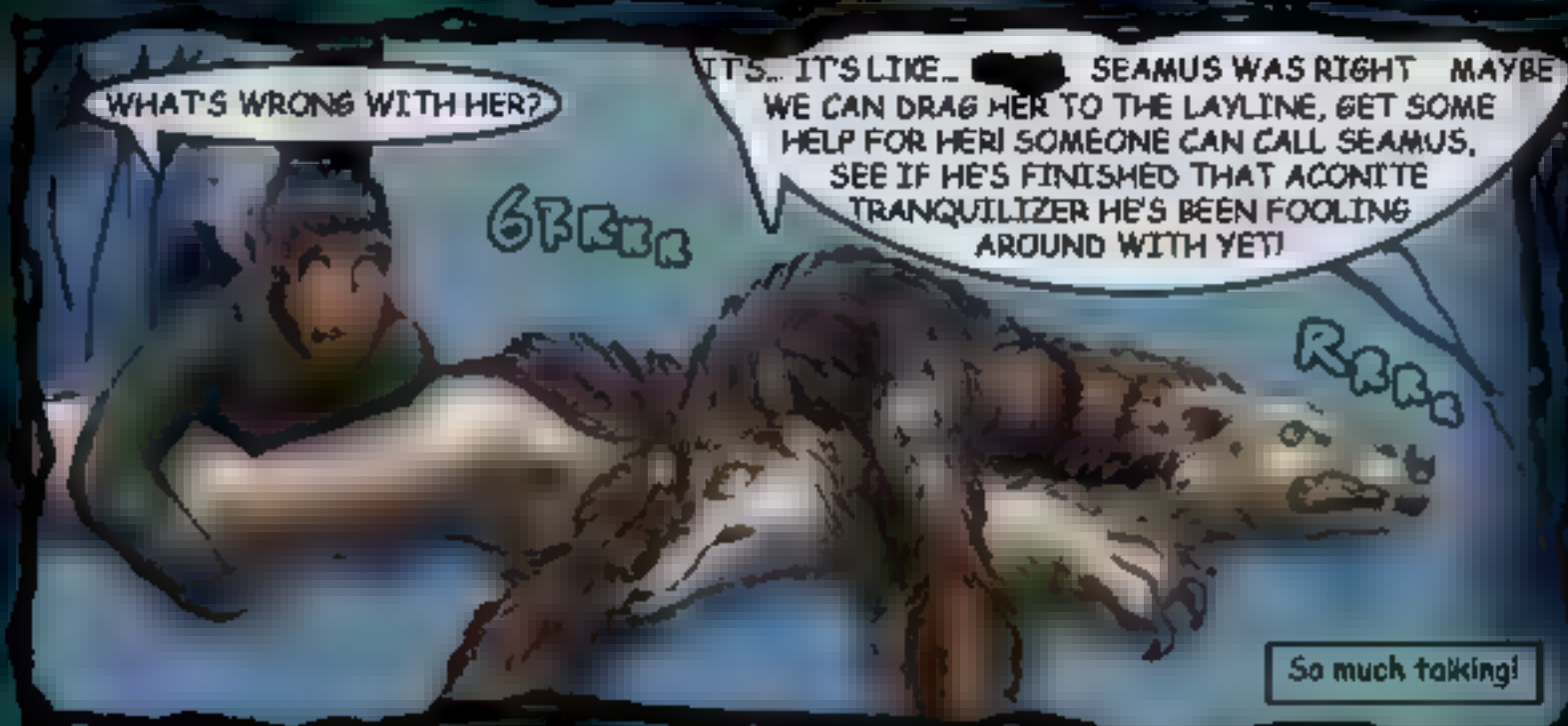
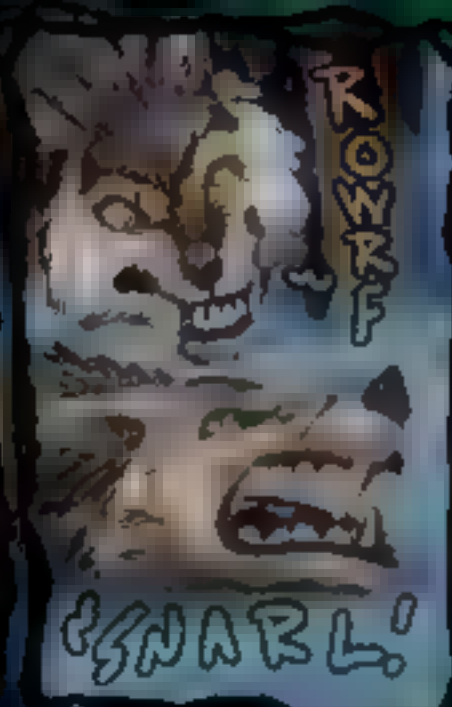
FAITH, DID HE
HURRRRT YOU? WHY ARE YOU CHASING
HIM? WHO IS THIS?

I DIDN'T
HURT HER, BUT WE NEED
TO GO!

FAITH? FAITH,
LOOK, I... I WAS WRONG. I'M
SORRRRRY I REALLY ~~WENT~~ IT UP, AND I
KNOW YOU'RE MAD, AND IF YOU WANT,
I'LL LEAVE YOU BE, BUT I'LL TRY TO MAKE
THINGS RIGHT AND--

More words! So irritating, so confusing!
I... I spoke an older, more honest language.

FAITH?



WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER?

IT'S... IT'S LIKE... SEAMUS WAS RIGHT MAYBE WE CAN DRAG HER TO THE LAYLINE, GET SOME HELP FOR HER! SOMEONE CAN CALL SEAMUS, SEE IF HE'S FINISHED THAT ACONITE TRANQUILIZER HE'S BEEN FOOLING AROUND WITH YET!

So much talking!



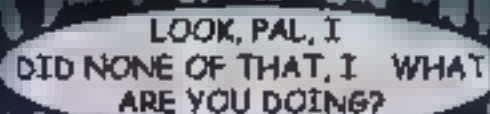
WHO?

UGH. SHE NEEDS TO BITE. OTHERWISE SHE'LL BE LIKE THIS UNTIL SUNRISE OR MOONSET

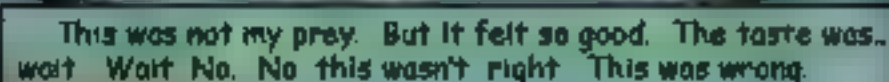
I HEAL FAST SHE CAN BI--



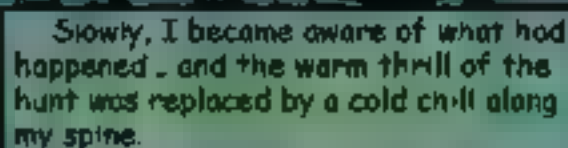
NO WAY SHE'S SO MUCH AS LICKING A FILTHY VAMPIRE. I KNOW YOUR KIND. YOU ALL BUT WIPED US FAIRYTALE WOLVES OUT, YEARS AGO, BECAUSE OF THAT DUMB SUPERSTITION ABOUT WOLVES KILLING VAMPIRES. COMPLETELY WIPED US OUT OF IRELAND--



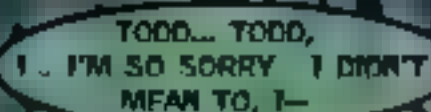
LOOK, PAL, I
DID NONE OF THAT, I WHAT
ARE YOU DOING?



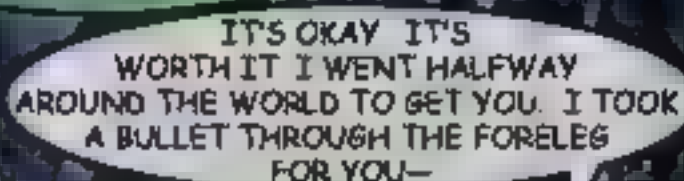
This was not my prey. But it felt so good. The taste was...
wait Wait No. No this wasn't right This was wrong.



Slowly, I became aware of what had
happened... and the warm thrill of the
hunt was replaced by a cold chill along
my spine.



TODD... TODD,
I... I'M SO SORRY I DIDN'T
MEAN TO, I—



IT'S OKAY IT'S
WORTH IT I WENT HALFWAY
AROUND THE WORLD TO GET YOU. I TOOK
A BULLET THROUGH THE FORELEG
FOR YOU—



YOU SAID IT WAS A JUST GRAZE?

I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO WORRY; I MADE DYLAN PROMISE NOT TO TELL YOU HOW BAD IT WAS. I JUST... I'M SAYING... THAT YOU MEAN A LOT TO ME. I KNOW THIS IS NOT YOUR FAULT AND IT'S WORTH BEING BITTEN BY YOU IF IT KEEPS YOU SAFE AND HAPPY.



WELL... I GUESS NOW THAT'S SORTED OUT. I SHOULD BE GOING---



OH NO YOU DON'T.

URKI

YOU'RE A YOUNG ONE... AND HAVEN'T BEEN FEEDING TOO OFTEN, OTHERWISE I'D HAVE TO HAVE FAITH HELP--

TODD, HE'S OKAY, HE'S A FRIEND!

REALLY, I AM!



HE'S NOT ALLOWED HERE, FAITH. I HAVE TO TAKE HIM TO GAOTH.

PLEASE, PLEASE DON'T! IT'S MY FAULT, HE WAS HELPING ME--



LOT OF GOOD HE DID YOU TOO. HE NEARLY LEAD YOU ALL THE WAY TO MAPLEVIEW. GOODFORNOTHING IRRESPONSIBLE VAMPIRE. YOU COULD HAVE GOTTEN CLOSE ENOUGH TO TOWN TO HAVE HURRT SOMEONE, RED.



I WAS JUST TRYING NOT TO GET MAULED TO DEATH.



I argued with Todd as he marched out of the forest, which was a surprisingly short walk. Todd had been right. Sam had been unwittingly leading me right for trouble.



HEY, CAREFUL!

TODD!
IT'S LATE, WE
JUST CLOSED... WHAT
IS THIS... VAMPIRE
DOING HERE?

HE WAS TRESPASSING—

HE PROBABLY
SOMEHOW FORCED FAITH
INTO BITE LUST—

WHO KNOWS
WHAT HIS REAL INTENT-
IONS ARE--

HE WAS HELPING ME—

SEAMUS
SAID IT MIGHT BE
DELAYED!

HE HAS GOOD INTENTIONS—

I... WAIT!
I CAN PROVE IT!
YOUR PIANO!

QUIET! VAMPIRES ARE
SNEAKY, MANIPULATIVE... HE MAY
ONLY SEEM LIKE HE HAS GOOD
INTENTIONS.

...WHAT?



THAT PIANO! THE
ONE THAT SEAMUS WAS PLAYING ON
HALLOWEEN! IT PLAYS MUSIC BASED UPON WHO
PEOPLE TRULY ARE! LET HIM PLAY
IT, THEN JUDGE HIM!

THAT,
UH... SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD
PLAN.



FAITH
MAKES A GOOD
POINT.



...OKAY. LET HIM TRY.

The song started sweetly, then got tense... A quick little beat...



But then it changed into a slow melody that became... so, so sad.



And that gradually built into a ... almost heroic fanfare that grew in volume, and I swear, I could almost hear trumpets backing it up. Heck.. maybe I did. Who knows what a magic piano can do?



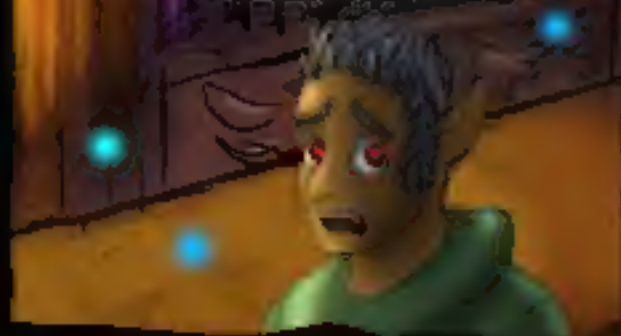
YOU CANNOT TELL ME THAT MELODY INDICATES THAT HE HAS BAD INTENTIONS.

HE STILL TRESPASSED—

TO HELP ME!



OBERON GAOTH. I AM SORRY TO HAVE DISTRESSED YOU. IF IT IS OKAY, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE MY LEAVE...



... NO.



BUT HE'S NOT A BAD—

YOU MISUNDERSTAND.
I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK WITH
HIM. I'VE NEVER HEARD ANYONE PLAY
ANYTHING QUITE LIKE THAT, SAVE, PERHAPS
FOR DYLAN. I MIGHT EVEN WISH TO HEAR IT AGAIN.
IT SEEMS... PERHAPS MODERN VAMPIRES AREN'T
LIKE THE ONES I ENCOUNTERED IN MY
MOUNTAINS, LONG AGO, OR THE ONES
WHO HUNTED TODD'S KIND. COME.
I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS
YOUR KIN...

AH...UM...
OKAY, JUST... HOLD
ON A SEC.

THANKS
FOR NOT TEARING
ME UP...

AND THANKS FOR
STICKING UP FOR ME ALONG
WITH FAITH, EVEN THOUGH WE DON'T
KNOW ONE ANOTHER. MAYBE
WE CAN TALK LATER?

N... NO PROBLEM.

SEE
TODD, HE'S NOT THAT
BAD.

OH, AND TODD?

I'M STILL UPSET WITH YOU...
BUT, THOUGH MY MEMORY SEEMS REALLY SPOTTY, I REMEMBER
YOU APOLOGIZING WHEN I WAS... MESSED UP. THANKS FOR THAT, AND THANKS FOR
STOPPING ME FROM HURTING ANYONE. IF YOU NEED A HAND GETTING BANDAGED
UP, OR... ANYTHING REALLY... LET ME KNOW.

The worst possible thing had happened...
I was out and about when I was dangerous...
I could have done to other people what had
been done to me. And yet... even though
nothing seemed to go as planned... every-
thing was turning out okay. My friends
saved me. I longed to be normal... but I
could pass as normal if I needed to. I had
a solid lead on who bit me, which could help
me get answers as to why all of this had
happened to me. The bad guys weren't
gonna get me. Even my new friend... well,
he was gonna be okay. Maybe... maybe
things were finally looking up.